576 A tribesman now separates himself from the
587 'home side' and, very fast and in a loud voice,
533 declaims verses which he has composed (fig. 1). If these are not accepted by his companions he declaims others, until acceptance is indicated by cries of 'Yallah.' He then begins to intone the first half of his verses in a chant peculiar to the occasion, and is followed by the leading half of the column. The second half of the verses is chanted by the second half of the column. When the poet is satisfied that the words are being sung correctly by all, he resumes his place in the column and joins in the singing. The column has meanwhile continued to wheel and circle (fig. 2).

576 The visitors can judge, from the words sung,
533 whether their welcome is a hearty one, or not. These words are not always polite, and the

576 but it is a hard and fast rule that no news shall be given. The sheikh and ten men may have been killed in a blood feud the day before, but the answer to the question : ' Any news ? '—which is invariably asked—is always given in the formula —' There is no news, and nothing has been ' started, and nothing has been destroyed, and ' no one has said anything to anybody.'

This flat denial of news ends the ceremony. The visitors, if they are staying, hand over their rifles to their hosts, and are led by the left hand [272] into the village, where they drink the bitter infusion of coffee-husk, flavoured with ginger. Conversation then becomes normal, and news is exchanged.

576 This greeting ceremony, as performed by the
• 537 Aulaqi tribesmen, with its long and rather

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[text continued on p. 90(A)]

576 monotonous chant, has considerable dignity, but
587 as performed by the Qaramish, at a fast and ungainly run, it strikes one as laughable.

576 The most remarkable feature about the ceremony as a whole is the twisted path taken by the singers, for the more the leaders wheel and turn,

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